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ABSTRACT

Scheduled for implementation in 1985, Student Excellence through Educational Development of Staff (SEEDS) is a 3-year cooperative partnership between four rural Southwest Iowa school districts to provide comprehensive, long-term staff development that promises to heighten student achievement through increasing instructional/supervision skills of teachers/administrators at a cost of $5,000 per school. The program is based on effective schools research which links student achievement/learning to specific abilities of teachers to incorporate proven learning theory into their lessons. First-year activities will include preservice and inservice sessions for all administrators and a select cadre of teachers, student testing, and evaluation/planning. Second-year activities will provide preservice/inservice training for approximately 160 staff from the 4 schools and small group follow up by facilitators between inservice sessions. In the final year, administrators and the teacher cadre will be responsible for training new staff and any necessary retraining of all staff. Teacher/administrator results will be evaluated by observation and clinical supervision and changes in student achievement and attitudes will be measured using standardized achievement tests and attitude inventory scales. For success, the project will require a high level of cooperation as well as initiative, patience, flexibility, and openness. (NEC)

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PROJECT S.E.E.D.S
(STUDENT EXCELLENCE THROUGH EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF)

By

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Paper presented at the Annual National Rural Education Association Conference (Cedar Rapids, IA, October 12-15, 1985)

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Project S.E.E.D.S.
(Student Excellence through Educational Development of Staff)

Rationale

Project S.E.E.D.S. is a unique cooperative partnership between 4 rural Southwest Iowa school districts, Malvern, Nishna Valley, Essex, and Fremont-Mills. It's purpose is to provide a comprehensive, long term, staff development program that promises to heighten student achievement through increasing the instructional skills of teachers and the clinical supervision skills of their administrators. It is based on an ever-increasing amount of effective schools research which links student achievement and learning to the specific abilities of the teacher to incorporate proven learning theory into their lessons. For example, we now know that a teacher can increase a student's motivation to learn by using motivation theory, make the lesson more productive by incorporating the elements of lesson design, or making student practice more effective through the application of learning research. We truly believe that the real key, then, to how students learn is how teachers teach.

With this premise to work from, lets look at the rationale for cooperative partnerships between schools that can really make a difference for kids. Why can't a small rural district do it alone?

1) Like many other small schools in Iowa we have a fairly large teacher turnover and most if not all replacements are teachers new to education.
2) Those teachers who remain with us do not get appropriate staff development. Current economic conditions, time constraints, and a lack of relevant comprehensive out of district inservice programs have led most tenured staff to not enroll in any staff development activities or if they do to find only one shot or short term programs.
3) Even though most of our teachers come to us with intuitive skills for working with students and most gain valuable teaching techniques with years of experience, we find that teachers and administrators alike have an appalling lack of specific research-based training in how students learn best and what specific teaching techniques research have shown make a real difference in how students learn.
4) In schools our size, funds for staff development are very limited. With limited funding, it is almost impossible to provide a comprehensive long term program. Further, faculty size makes it not cost effective to try to retain top notch nationally recognized presenters for a school district of 30 to 40 staff members.
5) Staff size also makes it difficult to provide appropriate follow up after presenters leave. Further, maintenance of project enthusiasm is more difficult because the support network is limited to those within your own district.

Planning

With these concerns, the concept of Project S.E.E.D.S. began as the brain child of the superintendents from Malvern, Nishna Valley, Essex and Fremont-Mills during the spring and early fall of 1984. The thinking began to gel quickly with the announce-

ment in early October 1984 of Educational Improvement Allowable Growth Grants due in to the Department of Public Instruction November 1, 1985. A rough draft of the plan was completed. At this time, the expertise of the A.E.A. administrative staff was requested and willingly given. During the next three weeks, they provided information and training on effective schools research, and provided objective critiques of program drafts as well as specific suggestions to increase the quality of the project. After the initial submission and before approval of the project, the A.E.A. continued to provide assistance for cooperating schools by coordinating visitations to schools who were currently involved in long term staff development programs and putting together a plan to provide a funding match of $1,000.00 per school to augment the budget for nationally prominent presenters to provide the series of presenters called for as part of the project. Finally, since our cooperative project was approved, the A.E.A. administrative staff has coordinated visitations to hear and talk to prominent national presenters including Madeline Hunter and her associates to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of project plans and timelines. Consultant staff trained in staff development have also been assigned to our four schools to provide facilitation and follow up during the multiyear project.

Project Design

The Project S.E.E.D.S. design addresses the multiple concerns discussed in the rationale and provides for a high quality, comprehensive staff development program for all staff members in our 4 districts at a highly cost effective price of $5,000.00 per school.

1) During the first year, the project will provide extensive training for all members of the administrative staff and a cadre of selected teachers from each building as well as the release and extended contract time necessary to provide meaningful comprehensive experiences for those being trained. Training in learning theory and practice will be provided by Dr. George Barker, Demonstration-Supervising Teacher at the U.C.L.A. Lab School under the direction of Dr. Madeline Hunter. 3 days of preservice and four days of intensive training will be provided by Dr. Barker to the participants in the first year of the program with follow up between sessions facilitated by previously trained administrators and the A.E.A. consultants assigned to our project. To provide positive linkage with the rest of the staff of the 4 schools, each building will be assisted in completing a needs assessment and effective building level plan which pinpoints staff development needs and other goals for each building to work toward. Finally, Dr. Barker will also provide a half day four school inservice presentation which will give each staff member an overview of the training that they will be receiving the next year, and let them know what the cadre is involved in during the first year's training.
2) During the second year, the project will provide training for approximately 160 staff members from the four cooperating schools. Dr. George Barker and Dr. Madeline Hunter will provide the kick off full day preservice prior to the beginning of the 1986-87 school year. Then Dr. Barker will provide one other full day inservice and four half day inservice sessions spread out through the school year. During the other part of each of the 1/2 day sessions, Dr. Barker will meet with the administrative staff and teacher cadres to provide additional training in clinical supervision skills and to prepare this group to lead small group sessions which follow up his large group presentations. This approach should maximize the use of peer instructors which research has shown are most effective in providing follow up activities and insuring retention and implementation of new skills by the teaching staff. A.E.A. consultants assigned to the program would also participate as small group facilitators directly after large group instruction and also to enhance follow up between inservice sessions.
3) During the third year, the administration and cadre would be responsible for providing training of new staff members and providing additional inhouse retraining for all staff members. Training time and location would be flexible since

all administrators and cadre would have two full years of training and would be able to assume responsibility for high quality large and small group presentations. The support group structure nutured during the first 2 years would help maintain enthusiasm and provide a reinforcing network of teachers and administrators from the four schools who could share common instructional concerns and collectively develop research based solutions.

Implementation Timeline

May 1985. Complete selection of staff cadre from each building.

June 1985. Meeting of districts' administrative staffs (all superintendents and principals) to provide complete overview of effective schools research and implementation plan and timeline for Year 1 of the project.

August 1985. (Prior to Preservice) 3 day inservice for all administration and teacher cadre. The first day will provide an overview of effective schools research and how it has been successfully applied in school districts in the Midwest. The presenter will be Larry Gregg, a practicing elementary principal at Blue Valley Unified School District in Stanley, Kansas. Blue Valley is in its third year of a comprehensive effective schools staff development program. The next two days will provide the overview presentation and activities for the Madeline Hunter Effective Teaching Model. Dr. George Barker will be the the presenter. Intensive training and interaction would be possible due to group size and timing. Activities and skills to practice would be assigned and due at next session.

September-April 1985. Administer appropriate achievement and motivation/school climate testing to all students K-10 (all students who will still be in school after initial full staff development has been completed). Each building under the leadership of the administrative staff and teacher cadre in that building and the A.E.A. staff will pass out, return, and compile data on administrative and staff perceptions based on a project developed needs assessment instrument.

October 1985. Half day inservice for administrators and teacher cadre with release time and substitutes arranged for all participating teachers. Continuation of presentations and practice with new assignments to be completed before next session. Afternoon session will bring entire staff together for brief project overview by superintendents and an overview of Madeline Hunter Effective Teaching Model by Dr. George Barker.

December 1985. Full day inservice for administrators and teacher cadre.

January 1986. Under the leadership of the administrator and teacher cadre members from each building, develop a building level plan using the results of the needs assessment instrument. This plan would personalize aspects of the staff development program and other activities to the perceived needs of staff in that building.

February 1986. Full day inservice for administrators and teacher cadre.

April 1986. Full day inservice for administrators and teacher cadre.

June 1986. Evaluation of first year of project followed by planning session for implementation of full staff inservice in fall of 1986. Development of roles and assignments for each administrator and teacher cadre member during the second year of the project.

August 1986. Full day inservice for all staff during preservice days to introduce the Madeline Hunter Effective Teaching Model. Dr. Madeline Hunter and George Barker will provide motivational start for program. Introduction of and some small group work with teacher cadre members and administrators to initiate small group setting for follow up training. Assignments and skills to be practiced are assigned for next session.

October 1986. One half day session with administration and staff cadre followed by a one half day session for all K-12 staff. This session would include a large group presentation by Dr. Barker on specific techniques and skills followed by small group sessions led by teacher cadre member. Morning session would stress clinical supervision skills for cadre members and provide specific help in how to facilitate small group sessions.

December 1986. One half day session with administration and staff cadre followed by a one half day session for all K-12 staff.

February 1987. Full day session for K-12 staff using large group and small group presentations.

March 1987. One half day session with administration and staff cadre followed by a one half day session for all K-12 staff.

April 1987. One half day session with administration and staff cadre followed by a one half day session for all K-12 staff.

June 1987. Evaluation session for second year of program followed by planning session for initiating training for new staff members and developing retraining schedule for current staff.

August 1987. Full day inservice for all new staff during preservice days to introduce the Madeline Hunter Effective Teaching Model or other appropriate models. Training would be conducted by trained teacher cadre and administrative staff.

October 1987. Full day inservice session for new staff members conducted by cadre and administration with release time and substitutes arranged for all participating teachers. Continuation of presentations and practice with new assignment to be completed before next session.

December 1987. Full day inservice session for new staff members conducted by cadre and administration.

February 1988. Full day inservice session for new staff members conducted by cadre and administration.

April 1988. Full day inservice session for new staff members conducted by teacher cadre and administration. First year post testing using achievement, student motivation and school climate testing instruments.

August 1988 - April 1989. Repeat timeline for 1987-88 school year for new staff as well as those teachers who request retraining or are asked to retrain as part of an intensive care program recommended by administrative evaluation.

Project Objectives

Because of the nature of this project, we feel that the entire student population will eventually benefit from the increased quality of teacher instruction. However since intensive staff development must take place during the first two years student project objectives will not begin to be realized until the third year of this multiyear project.

The following is a list of objectives which will be reached during the course of the projects operation:

1) Based on the needs assessment results, the needs of each building in the four districts will be identified in a staff development growth plan which will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect completion of those goals in the plan which have been achieved.
2) All staff members will develop and be able to demonstrate in actual teaching episodes the techniques and planning skills taught during the staff development program.
3) Staff members receiving two years of training as teacher cadre members will develop and be able to demonstrate skills for training other teachers in effective teaching techniques.
4) Administrators receiving two years of training will be able to provide effective clinical supervision for all staff members based on the effective teaching model and will reflect these skills in more meaningful supervision and evaluation for all staff members using clinical supervision techniques reinforced in project.
5) Average student achievement as measured by a composite score on standardized achievement testing will increase by a statistically significant amount between Year 1 when no comprehensive staff development program has been administered, and Year 3 and 4 when staff development implementation is in place for all staff members.
6) Student responses to a standardized instrument measuring student motivation level and school climate will show a statistically positive increase between Year 1 when no comprehensive staff development program has been administered and Year 3 and 4 when staff development implementation is in place for all staff.

Project Evaluation

The evaluation process will out of necessity require two types of evaluation since staff development training must proceed measurement of student achievement and attitude changes resulting from the application of that training. The evaluation of the staff development program will be accomplished informally throughout the training sessions through feedback received from assignments completed, monitoring of mini-teaching and observation sessions as well as the results of diagnostic testing using criterion reference quizes and tests. These tests and quizes which are part of the ongoing evaluation of the project will be developed as a joint effort by Dr. Barker as well as A.E.A. and local personnel who have already received extensive training in the Hunter Model. Administrators and teachers will all be involved in teaching/observation cycles included as part of staff training. Formal evaluation of the staff development training will be done at the completion of each school year. Measurement of growth in skills towards reaching our objectives will be accomplished in the following ways:

1) Observation and clinical supervision of staff members by the administrative staff of each participating district will identify specific growth from previous observations of effective teaching skills incorporated into observed lessons. The research-based elements of effective teaching such as motivation, reinforcement, retention, transfer, and lesson design which are developed in the Madeline Hunter Instructional Model will provide the base for the clinical supervision of each teacher. Based on a scripted observation, each administrator will identify these effective teaching elements as well as areas for improvement and will work with each teacher to incorporate effective skills into that teacher's style. In each clinical supervision cycle the building administrator will be observing classroom performance and recording evidence of effective teaching skills based on the Hunter Model. Our hypothesis is that as all staff members receive systematic training in the effective teaching model that those newly

learned skills will become part of that teacher's style and will be observed and recorded during the clinical supervision cycle. Reinforcement of these new skills during clinical supervision by the building administrator should tend to make staff members continue to practice and use these new skills. We should over the life of the project be able to observe and record specific changes in teaching performance and growth in the use of effective teaching skills that research has shown tend to increase the probability of successful student learning.

2) Teacher cadre members will be monitored by the administrative staff and Dr. Barker who will evaluate their increased effectiveness in presenting and modeling appropriate skills for other staff members.
3) Administrative staff will be evaluated by the superintendent and Dr. Barker on the quality of their observation and clinical supervision skills and the growth in ability to incorporate effective teaching research into the observations and recommendations for improvement made during the supervision/evaluation cycle.
4) Evaluation of growth in student achievement and attitude will begin with a measurement of these before any staff members have received the staff development training. Student achievement will be measured using a standardized achievement tests (ITBS and ITED or equivalent) while student attitude and school climate will be measured using the Quality of School Lifescale, School Interest Inventory or other appropriate measures. These same measures will again be administered at the conclusion of the first year after staff development training has been completed and again at the end of the second year after training has been completed. Results of these tests will be compared for statistically significant changes in student achievement and student attitude/school climate. Further subjective comparisons will be made between teacher observations made by administrative staff during each year of the project to substantiate teacher use of skills gained during the staff development program. Informal correlations then will be made between level of skills and student achievement and attitude.

Funding

The cost effectiveness of this cooperative staff development program is without a doubt a key element in the decision to enter this unique partnership. To bring in nationally prominent inservice presenters not just for a one-shot activity but for seven full days in each of two consecutive years is an expensive proposition. On top of that, providing extended teaching contracts for several staff cadre members and release time for those cadre members for four or five full school days each year is also costly.

The keys to cost effective funding for these high cost items are threefold. First, funding for each school is available through an application for an Educational Improvement Allowable Growth Grant which are due on November 1 of the year prior to implementation. These provide funding within specified limits on a 75% allowable growth, 25% local budget basis. Second, A.E.A. 13 has developed a plan to provide educational improvement incentives up to $1,000.00 per school for schools that have developed an effective schools plan for their district. Finally, the act of implementing a four district partnership allowed each district to parlay a $5,000.00 individual staff development budget into a $24,000.00 per year fund that allows us to provide a high quality staff development program equal to any available in a much larger system with an extensive inservice budget.

Applicability of Project to Other School Districts

We feel strongly that this project by its nature has great potential for use in other school districts. The need for staff development in developing teacher effectiveness is an almost universal need for school districts in Iowa. Beyond that, the staff development model using a multiyear process and training a teacher cadre holds promise for most districts not only for developing teacher effectiveness but

for any other type of comprehensive inservice program as well.

We also feel the project we are undertaking will provide maximum utilization of scarce funds involved. The quality comprehensive training in essential teacher techniques for the entire staff and administration would be impossible to duplicate on a limited inservice budget. Further, the design of this project provides for the maintenance of high level skills and the training of new staff members in important teaching skills and techniques without additional outside funding after the conclusion of the projects terms.

The Bottom Line

To make this project work and especially a project requiring a high level of cooperation between four very unique districts, abundant quantities of the following are necessary:

1) Initiative - Cooperative partners need to be willing to take the initiative at various times in the planning and development phases and shoulder unequal burdens for the common good of the project.

2) Patience - Even when district partners are very similar in size and programs, patience is needed to allow for individual differences in administrators, boards and staffs. Take time to make sure everyone is ready to take the next step before moving on.

3) Flexibility - Each district must be willing to be flexible and willing to change tradition, rearrange schedules, and adjust calendars to make the project workable for all districts.

4) Openness - Each district and especially the administrator of each district must be open and willing to communicate with the other administrators. Without this openness, the maintenance of the linkage necessary to keep a project of this type going would be difficult if not impossible.

WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL?
(Body of Current Research)
About Characteristics
In Schools
With Higher
Student Achievement

IDENTIFIED NEED OF
OUR FOUR DISTRICTS

Improve Teacher Instructional Skills
Improve Administrator Supervision
and Evaluation Skills

PROJECT S.E.E.D.S.

3 Year Design For Improving Teacher
Instructional Skills and Administrator
Supervision and Evaluation Skills

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Based On Effective
Schools Research

Identifies Other Areas Where
Principal and Staff See Need

OTHER NEEDS IDENTIFIED

What Other Needs Should Be
Addressed? How Will This Be
Done?

BUILDING LEVEL PLAN

GOAL A

Gain Madeline Hunter Mastery
Teaching Skills For Teachers
and Supervision Skills For
Administrators Through
Project S.E.E.D.S.

GOAL B GOAL C GOAL D

Other Goals and Plans For Reaching
Those Building Level Goals

A MORE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL
(Increase or Maintain High Student Achievement)